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Report by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the members of the General Assembly the report of the Joint Inspection Unit entitled "Feasibility study on the relocation of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research to the Turin Centre" (JIU/REP/96/2).

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FEASIBILITY STUDY ON THE RELOCATION OF UNITAR TO THE TURIN CENTRE

Prepared by

The Joint Inspection Unit

Geneva
1996

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Acronyms

ACC	Administrative Committee on Coordination
ACABQ	Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions
CCPOQ	Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions
ILO	International Labour Organisation
UNICRI	United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute
UNITAR	United Nations Institute for Training and Research
UNOG	United Nations Office at Geneva
UNSC	United Nations Staff College
UNSCP	United Nations Staff College Project

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) is currently located in Geneva, Switzerland. A proposal to move the Institute to the International Training Centre of the International Labour Organization (ILO) in Turin, Italy, is under consideration.

The objective of this feasibility study is two-fold: (1) to highlight the potential advantages and disadvantages, both financial and non-financial, of either maintaining UNITAR in Geneva or relocating it to Turin; and (2) to assess whether this relocation is compatible with the objective of rationalizing the United Nations system within the framework of the efforts underway, taking into account the financial autonomy of the Institute.

The information and documentation used for the analysis and conclusions were provided by the organizations, institutions and parties concerned (see para. 5). In the course of this study, several issues or questions were identified, which the Unit was unable to address fully, as they were outside the scope of its terms of reference and the established time-frame.

This feasibility study highlights primarily, potential advantages and disadvantages of relocating UNITAR from Geneva to Turin without attempting to determine the relative weight of each and make comparative judgements. In any event, since the relocation of UNITAR from New York to Geneva came as a consequence of a General Assembly decision, it would be useful for all parties concerned to follow the same procedures for any further relocation of UNITAR elsewhere, which would include seeking the approval of the General Assembly.

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Board of Trustees of UNITAR requested the Joint Inspection Unit (hereafter referred to as the Unit) to undertake a feasibility study on the relocation of UNITAR from Geneva, Switzerland, to the International Training Centre of the ILO in Turin, Italy, (hereafter referred to as the Turin Centre).

2. As agreed with the UNITAR Board of Trustees, the terms of reference for the study were to examine:

- potential financial costs and savings, both actual and hidden;
- non-financial costs and/or benefits;
- practical and/or financial advantages and disadvantages for countries benefiting from UNITAR training programmes and for those who contribute;
- possible impact on the level of resources received by the Institute; and
- the compatibility with the objective of rationalization of the United Nations system within the framework of the efforts underway, and taking into account the financial autonomy of the Institute.

3. These terms of reference should be viewed in light of the proposal by the Secretary-General for further co-ordination between UNITAR and the United Nations Staff College Project (UNSCP), located at the Turin Centre.

4. At the request of the Board of Trustees, the Unit undertook the commitment to prepare the study in time for the Board's consideration at its September session.

5. To conduct this study, the Unit carried out a series of interviews and enquiries involving members of the Board of Trustees of UNITAR, its Executive Director, representatives of donor countries, representatives of beneficiary and potential beneficiary countries, representatives of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the Director of the ILO Turin Centre, the Director of the UNSCP, a representative of the Swiss Government as current host country of UNITAR and a representative of the Government of Italy as potential host country of UNITAR. The Office of Legal Affairs of the United Nations was also consulted. In addition, the Unit analysed documentation relating to UNITAR, UNSCP and the Turin Centre.

6. Following its customary procedures, the Unit has gathered views and information and presents its conclusions in an impartial and independent manner, with the objective of clarifying the issues addressed in this study. The Unit conducted this study during June and July, 1996. Given these time constraints, the Unit limited its analysis of the financial implications to the data readily available and was not able to conduct a comparative analysis of long-term potential savings.

II. INSTITUTIONS INVOLVED IN THE PROPOSAL

A. UNITAR

7. UNITAR is an autonomous institution within the United Nations framework which was established by the Secretary-General of the United Nations on 11 December 1963 pursuant to General Assembly resolution 1934 (XVIII). Its purpose is to enhance "the effectiveness of the United Nations in achieving the major objectives of the Organization, by the performance of the functions of . . . training and research."[1] While training and research initially had equal roles, the current emphasis is on training, primarily for representatives of Member States, in the areas of economic and social development and international affairs management. UNITAR also conducts some research projects in support of training activities, as well as a few projects unrelated to training. UNITAR provides training activities to United Nations staff only in more specific subjects.

8. UNITAR is funded by voluntary contributions of Member States, inter-governmental organizations and non-governmental organizations to the General Fund, and earmarked donations to Special Purpose Grants. The Unit was informed that funding from the General Fund was US$843,046 in 1995, and that this funding covered mainly training activities in international affairs management through courses for representatives of Member States at Permanent Missions in New York, Geneva and Vienna. Certain costs relating to core staff and administrative matters are financed also through the General Fund. The Unit also was informed that funding from Special Purpose Grants was $US 3,756,966 in 1995, and that these expenses constitute earmarked funds for specific training programmes. Contributions to the General Fund often have varied considerably, causing financial instability. Additional financial uncertainty for UNITAR results from the fact that the Special Purpose Grants, which include an element of programme support costs related to the administration of the training programmes, also vary considerably by nature.

9. The UNITAR Board of Trustees formulates policies, establishes procedures, reviews and approves the programme of work, and makes recommendations for the effective functioning of the Institute. It consists of representatives of Member States, with the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the President of the United Nations General Assembly, the President of the Economic and Social Council and the Executive Director of UNITAR as ex officio members. According to the United Nations Legal Counsel, the Secretary General of the United Nations has overall legal and administrative responsibilities for UNITAR but, "is not responsible for acts done by that Institute."[2]

10. The United Nations Secretary-General may amend the Statute of UNITAR, after consultation with the Board of Trustees, in light of the pertinent decisions of the General Assembly. UNITAR can change its structure in response to changing circumstances without an amendment to its statute or mandate, and has in fact done this to adjust to new activities and changing levels of financial resources. Several studies on the future of UNITAR have been conducted. One major study is the so-called Blanchard report of 1991,[3] prepared at the request of the General Assembly (resolution 45/219). The major points of this report, which are relevant to the present feasibility study, include:

- the need to view any restructuring of UNITAR in the context of the re-examination of all training and research institutes and their association with each other, including joint programme planning and implementation based on the multi-disciplinary and cross-sectoral nature of many training activities;
- the shift in focus of UNITAR from a think-tank to a training and research institute that supports training;

- the fact that reliance on Special Purpose Grants can create pressure to undertake activities unrelated to UNITAR's mandate;
- the recommendation to move UNITAR from New York to Geneva to place it in close proximity to appropriate organizations and related centres in Europe, and specifically in Geneva;
- the association of UNITAR with the Turin Centre with regard to establishing the concept of a United Nations staff college;
- the need to incorporate training into the programmes and policies of United Nations organizations; and
- the crucial role of a network of UN-related training institutions, of which the Turin Centre and UNITAR could be the first and essential link.

11. The Board of Trustees approved the recommendations contained in the Blanchard report and the Secretary-General transmitted it to the General Assembly.

12. Due to the financial and credibility crisis faced by UNITAR, and following one specific recommendation of the Blanchard report, the General Assembly decided to transfer UNITAR from New York to Geneva. Thereafter, the Secretary-General appointed an Acting Executive Director of UNITAR. The phasing-out process in New York was completed by 31 December 1993.

B. THE ILO INTERNATIONAL TRAINING CENTRE IN TURIN

13. The Turin Centre was established in 1963 as the training arm of the ILO. Its mandate is "to provide training activities at the service of economic and social development, in accordance with, and through, the promotion of international labour standards."[4] The target groups that are trained through the Centre comprise United Nations system staff, representatives of Permanent Missions of Member States, national government officials, officials of non-governmental organizations and other individuals, including from the private sector.

14. The Turin Centre may make arrangements with the United Nations, Specialized Agencies and other international organizations to pursue activities in conformity with the objective of the Centre. While the Turin Centre originally carried out mainly ILO-related training activities, over the last five years it has carried out an increasing number of training activities for the United Nations system. As a result, the United Nations System Training Programme section has grown to be one of the largest training components at the Turin Centre.

15. The Centre is an integral part of the ILO and operates under the overall authority of the Governing Body of ILO. The Turin Centre is governed by a separate Statute and Board, whose members are chosen from local, regional and national authorities, non-governmental organizations, several United Nations system organizations and representatives of Member States to the ILO Governing Body. The Centre's Board is chaired by the Director-General of the ILO. While the Statute is based on the Rules and Regulations of the ILO, it maintains a separate set of Rules and Regulations and administrative procedures specifically adapted to the needs and requirements of a training institution. The Director of the Turin Centre is an Assistant Director-General of the ILO, based in Geneva, with its Deputy-Director resident at the Centre.

16. The Centre is financed through a combination of funding sources. In 1996, the overall budget of the Turin Centre was just below US$ 30 million. The ILO provides approximately 10 to 12 percent of the total budget, while earned income provides over 60 percent.[5] This income comes from the implementation of training activities on behalf of other organizations, or through direct fees from sponsored individual participants, consultancy assignments, development of training materials and others. The remaining funding comes from a variety of sources, including local, provincial and national authorities in Italy; governments, intergovernmental organizations and international non-governmental organizations; and gifts, grants and legacies.

17. As part of a recent development plan of the Turin Centre, considerable investments have been made in further strengthening the training infrastructure of the Centre. The reproduction and printing facilities are now of such a standard that they can compete commercially, and the use of new technologies, such as video-conferencing, is now an integral part of the activities of the Centre.

18. The Turin Centre hosts other research and training entities of the United Nations system. The Turin Centre will soon be hosting another United Nations institute, the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI). A recent agreement was signed between the United Nations and the ILO for the relocation of UNICRI to the Turin Centre campus and for the use of its facilities and services,[6] but the potential benefits to both institutions are still to be realized.

C. UNITED NATIONS STAFF COLLEGE PROJECT

19. For the first time in 1971, at the initiative of the Executive Director of UNITAR, who acted with the concurrence of the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC), the General Assembly considered a proposal for the creation of a staff college and decided to "...approve in principle the idea of the establishment of a United Nations staff college and to defer consideration of the proposal to set up a staff college..." [7] until a more comprehensive examination had been presented. The following year the proposal was further elaborated, but the General Assembly decided again to defer a decision on the matter. Finally, in 1973, upon the recommendation of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ), the General Assembly abandoned this proposal and it was left to UNITAR to launch some initial activities in inter-agency training.

20. Since then, the concept of a staff college has been mentioned repeatedly, in the context of providing the staff of the organizations with the skills, knowledge and techniques required for responding efficiently and effectively to the needs of the Member States. One of the primary reasons why it has remained a proposal rather than a reality is the difficulty of ensuring the necessary common commitment, financial and otherwise, from both Member States and the organizations of the United Nations system to the creation of yet another institution. In addition, there is concern regarding how to ensure that such an initiative operates in the appropriate institutional framework to fulfil its mandate.

21. There remains an overall need to use training as a fundamental tool for instilling in the United Nations system staff the necessary "management culture," thereby facilitating United Nations reforms, which include streamlining, consolidating and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the United Nations system.

22. In this connection the Secretary-General officially announced the creation of the UNSCP on 8 January 1996. According to one representative of the Secretary-General, the UNSCP is based on an in-depth feasibility study conducted in 1995 by a group of senior experts.

23. The UNSCP is currently located at the Turin Centre in Italy, to support training initiatives for both United Nations system staff and United Nations partners, as part of the process of creating a new management culture. Many of the on-going training activities of the Centre, which, according to one representative of the Secretary-General, are carried out in direct response to various General Assembly resolutions on operational activities, General Assembly Resolution 47/199 in particular, and at the request of the inter-Agency Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational questions (CCPOQ), will be integrated into the UNSCP framework. In addition, the UNSCP will be developing and delivering new joint activities and acting as the support structure of the network.

24. The basic objective of the UNSCP is to design and deliver system-wide training for both United Nations staff and national partners in order to: (1) strengthen management capacities and to promote a more cohesive management culture; and (2) build more effective cross-programme linkages and support cross-sectoral integration in the major areas of activity of the United Nations. Thus, rather than duplicating existing training activities, the declared aim of the UNSCP is to supplement and expand training in areas of common concern and also to pool resources and share experiences as appropriate.

25. An essential part of the concept of the UNSCP is to be flexible and responsive, and to develop training activities in response to clearly identified needs. As a means to ensure this responsiveness and demand-driven approach, the UNSCP is financed entirely by contributions to specific training initiatives. Furthermore, as the UNSCP is to some extent charting new ground, experience would indicate the most appropriate institutional framework for performing its mandate in the future, and toward this end, an assessment and evaluation of the project after its initial 5-year period, would appear appropriate.

26. The UNSCP is financed from many sources including voluntary contributions of individual Member States, contributions by United Nations and other organizations, revenues from its activities, and contributions from foundations and civic society, as appropriate, for specific training initiatives within its mandate. Since the UNSCP is conceived as a system-wide training network, the support of United Nations system organizations would be essential. Several organizations already have provided contributions in kind through the secondment of senior-level experts to the core management unit of the UNSCP.

27. An Advisory Panel, approved by the Secretary-General and chaired by a senior panel member, would have overall responsibility for developing substantive guidance for the UNSCP. The members of the Advisory Panel would be eminent persons in the training and substantive technical fields both from within and outside the United Nations system. Currently, the core management unit of the UNSCP manages jointly developed activities and acts as the support structure for the network. According to the Secretary-General, the Turin Centre was selected as the site of the UNSCP because it is the only residential training institution in the United Nations system and because it has considerable institutional experience and knowledge in managing training programmes, an established network with other training institutions and an established administrative infrastructure. In addition, the Turin Centre already has a programme, in support of the United Nations system as a whole, that has delivered training since 1990.

28. The Unit was informed that the United Nations Staff College, if approved by the General Assembly, would have a separate identity, operate on a full cost-recovering basis and be charged for administrative costs and overhead by the Turin Centre.

III. THE PROPOSAL FOR CO-OPERATION BETWEEN UNITAR AND THE UNSCP (INCLUDING POSSIBLE RELOCATION TO TURIN)

29. The Secretary-General's initiative calls for much closer cooperation between UNITAR and UNSCP. This is rooted in trends within the United Nations system to restructure the secretariats and the intergovernmental machinery in order to consolidate functions, programmes and activities and thereby avoid duplication and overlap, as well as to discontinue obsolete, marginal and/or terminated activities, thus, achieving savings and improving the performance, efficiency and effectiveness of the United Nations system.

30. A number of resolutions emanating from the governing bodies of various United Nations organizations in support of greater coherence and effectiveness of training within the United Nations system, have stressed the need for innovative and integrated system-wide training programmes and activities designed for both international and national staff. General Assembly resolution 47/199 (paras., 43 to 47) is especially relevant to the Secretary-General's initiative.

31. Several reviews to assess the training institutions and activities within the United Nations system in order to propose concrete, practical measures to improve coordination have been requested or proposed, the most recent request being made by the General Assembly in resolution 47/227 of 4 May 1993. In most cases, however, such reviews were not conducted.[8]

32. General Assembly resolution 47/227 regarding UNITAR, which included the decision to transfer UNITAR from New York to Geneva, explicitly requested the United Nations Secretary-General to further explore closer co-operation between UNITAR and other qualified national and international training institutions, including the Turin Centre. The potential for cooperation takes on new dimensions with the recent initiative of the UNSCP.

33. UNITAR and United Nations officials, including the Director of UNSCP, have held discussions regarding the initiative of the Secretary-General where they have identified two areas of joint activity, preventive diplomacy and peace-making, but concrete results have not yet been realized.

34. The Unit was informed that, as part of this exchange, the Executive Director of UNITAR was requested ". . . to prepare for the Board and for the Secretary-General: (a) a proposal for programme collaboration between the United Nations Staff College and UNITAR; and (b) a draft timetable for whatever physical association with the UNSC in Turin is feasible before the end of this year."[9]

35. The Board of Trustees has discussed the question several times and at its thirty fourth session, held in Geneva from 30 April to 2 May 1996, considered ". . . the explicit interest of the Secretary-General of the United Nations in the transfer of UNITAR to Turin, as expressed in the speech read on his behalf by the Director-General of UNOG. . . ."[10] The representative of the Secretary-General to the Board stated that ". . . the Secretary-General has indicated that a move of UNITAR to Turin would appear desirable as it would regroup in one main location two major providers of training activities in the United Nations system" which is one of the factors that led "the Secretary-General to believe that it is in everyone's best interest to consider favourably such an arrangement." (Emphasis added.)

36. The extent to which this implies a total physical relocation can be argued, but it should be clear that it is a proposal for consideration by the Board of Trustees. As the supreme legislative authority in this field, the General Assembly would take the final decision.

37. The process of developing and reviewing the proposal certainly has been subject to misgivings and misinterpretations. Nevertheless, all interviewees, without exception, supported and stressed the need for better coordination and called for a long-standing, comprehensive arrangement among the various United Nations system institutions dealing with training.

IV. ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF POTENTIAL RELOCATION OF UNITAR FROM GENEVA TO TURIN

A. ACTUAL AND HIDDEN FINANCIAL COSTS AND SAVINGS

38. Table I below shows the estimated annual savings that would be achieved if UNITAR, with its current staffing levels, were relocated to Turin, based on data provided by the United Nations Secretariat. These savings estimates are based on fixed costs, which are defined as the cost of UNITAR facilities operations and maintenance and staff covered by the General Fund and the Special Purpose Grants. Estimated cost savings of approximately $US400,000 represent mainly the difference in the post adjustment levels between Geneva and Turin.

39. The assumption made by the United Nations Secretariat in these figures is that the number of staff would remain the same in Turin as it is currently in Geneva, which represents 11 Professional and 4 General Service level staff.

Table I.

Location	*Recurrent Costs* ($US)*		*Totals ($US)*
	Staff	*Rent/Common Services*	
Geneva	$1,750,000	$78,000	$1,828,000
Turin	$1,350,000	$60,000	$1,410,000
Total yearly savings	**$400,000**	**$18,000**	$418,000

**Includes staff costs and rent/common services covered through the General Fund and Special Purpose Grants.*
Source: United Nations Secretariat

40. The Unit was informed that the Swiss authorities provide to the United Nations the building UNITAR now occupies in Geneva at no cost, while the United Nations charges UNITAR approximately $US 78,000 per year for rent. The General Assembly and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions have called upon the Secretary-General to take action to remedy this anomaly. According to the United Nations Secretariat, the $78,000 charged as rent, represents charges for rent/common services.

41. The Unit was informed that if UNITAR is relocated to Turin, it would enjoy free-of-charge premises, but would be charged $US 50,000 to $US 60,000 per year for common services at the Turin Centre. Table I has taken into account the highest possible cost of common services, according to the information given (US$60,000), resulting in an estimated cost savings of $US18,000 for rent/common services.

42. According to the figures provided by the United Nations Secretariat, the premises UNITAR plans to occupy in the Turin Centre would require approximately $US300,000 for refurbishing (non-recurrent cost), which the Italian authorities have indicated they would finance. In addition, non-recurrent costs of the removal would amount to approximately $US300,000 which would be offset by the estimated $US 418,000 in recurring saving to be achieved in the first year, resulting in a net saving of $US 118,000 in the first year. This assumes funds for the removal costs will be available at the time of removal.

43. The Swiss authorities have informed the Unit that they plan to demolish the building where UNITAR is presently located. The Unit received assurances that if UNITAR were to remain in Geneva, it would be relocated in the near future to a more modern building, and the Swiss Government would provide it at "favourable conditions" to UNITAR. It would be useful for the Secretary-General and the Executive Director of UNITAR to clarify with the Swiss authorities what these "favourable conditions" represent in order to better understand the cost-savings implications of a relocation of UNITAR to Turin.

44. Table II incorporates other figures that were given by UNITAR. These figures only cover costs financed by the General Fund. UNITAR's cost estimates for 1997, financed through General Fund resources, are $450,000 for staff in Geneva and $330,000 for staff in Turin.

45. According to UNITAR, other cost estimates that are covered through the General Fund include the costs for common services. In Turin, these costs are estimated at $60,000 and in Geneva, UNITAR assumed the new building would be provided to UNITAR, once the old one is demolished, at no cost. Costs covered by the Special Purpose Grants have not been included due to their variable nature and, therefore their unpredictability.

Table II.

Location	*Recurrent Costs ($US)**		*Totals ($US)*
	Staff	*Rent/Common Services*	
Geneva	$450,000	-	$450,000
Turin	$330,000	$60,000	$390,000
Total yearly savings	**$120,000**	**($60,000)**	**$60,000**

** Includes staff costs and rent/common services covered through the General Fund only.*

Source: UNITAR

46. If both tables and the underlying assumptions by which the figures have been derived are taken into account, the Unit can only conclude that according to the data provided, potential savings are expected to accrue in a transfer of UNITAR from Geneva to Turin.

47. The above savings estimates relate to the fixed costs of staff, common services and rent. A more complete picture of the potential financial savings could be provided by analysing the potential variable cost savings if the current level of UNITAR activities had been carried out with UNITAR located in Turin. These variable costs are financed primarily by Special Purpose Grants, which are directly associated with the level of activities. The relocation to Turin may affect the variable costs, which would include, for example, the cost

of UNITAR staff travel to training locations, communications, and consultants working in Turin rather than in Geneva. These variable costs do not include travel of participants.

48. Assuming that the level of activities, which is not fully reflected in Table I, remains the same if UNITAR is relocated to Turin, including the duration and location of training, cost projections could have been calculated, using current Turin costs as a base. However, these data were not readily available and given the time constraints of this study, such an analysis was not possible.[11]

49. In comparing the difference in cost between different locations, different assumptions were made by UNOG and UNITAR regarding levels of financing. In the case of fixed costs, the Unit assumed the General Fund would remain at least at the current level. However, all the donors interviewed expressed the view that while they are satisfied with the current performance of UNITAR, which has gained the confidence of both donors and recipients after completing its relocation to Geneva, a move to Turin would create a situation of uncertainty.

50. All donors explained that they would need to reassess their level and policy of contribution in the light of the performance of UNITAR in the new environment in Turin. The availability of other potential donors to compensate for a potential shortage of funds is not assured. Therefore, UNITAR could face a shortfall until it re-establishes its funding base.

51. In the case of the Special Purpose Grants, a representative of an important donor to these grants has indicated it is attractive to co-operate with UNITAR for organizing certain training and research, primarily due to its location in Geneva. The donor probably would look for other partners if UNITAR is relocated.

52. Many interviewees stressed the importance of UNITAR's proximity to other organizations located in Geneva and how this facilitates organizing specialized training programmes at low cost.

B. NON-FINANCIAL COSTS AND/OR BENEFITS

Non-financial advantages of relocating UNITAR from Geneva to Turin

53. The question of co-ordination between UNITAR and the UNSCP as two important training institutions of the United Nations is crucial to the discussion of closer cooperation. Some interviewees pointed out that if UNITAR is located in Turin, it would be able to better co-ordinate and interact with the UNSCP, the Turin Centre and UNICRI. The potential impact of the combined work and better utilization of services provided by the Turin Centre would be a significant benefit.

54. The synergy at the substantive and technical level between professionals in training, resulting from the interaction between UNITAR and the other institutions currently located at Turin Centre, would also facilitate sharing of ideas, expertise and methodologies of training, including pooling of resources in new training technologies.

55. Some interviewees emphasized that, as the only residential training facility in the United Nations system, the Turin Centre has the image and credibility of being an entity dedicated to meeting training needs. Although the Turin Centre operates under ILO overall administration, many United Nations system-wide training activities are carried out at or through the Turin Centre free of substantive interference. The Turin Centre is often used as a venue for workshops, conferences and meetings of United Nations system and others interested in United Nations matters, and therefore provides a good opportunity for intellectual and professional exchange.[12]

56. Training being its sole purpose, the Turin Centre is continuously working to ensure that its organizational structure, common services and facilities, and rules and procedures are geared to training activities. The Centre also attracts voluntary contributions and earmarked funds, and has the necessary flexibility to respond to the training needs of its various constituencies. Therefore, any institutions located there could benefit from this feature.

Non-financial disadvantages of relocating UNITAR from Geneva to Turin

57. Many interviewees fear that locating UNITAR in Turin would isolate it from the United Nations system organizations and other institutions, both public and private, located in Geneva, with which UNITAR works closely. The main argument is that direct and personal contacts and interaction between UNITAR and its associates are crucial for mobilizing resources and organizing training activities.

58. According to several interviewees, the fact that the Director of Turin Centre is based in Geneva raises doubts that relocation to Turin would lead to a better coordination between UNITAR and other institutions.

59. The legal arrangements involved in the transfer of UNITAR, in particular regarding its staff, have not been concluded. According to the United Nations Office of Legal Affairs, "Concerning especially the need for a host country agreement with Italy in case of relocation of UNITAR, we note that there are several precedents of such agreements having being negotiated and concluded, including as a result of the relocation of United Nations bodies, and do not anticipate that a headquarters agreement would pose in this case any inordinate difficulty."[13] Further, the Unit was informed that unless the General Assembly decides otherwise, any relocation of UNITAR to a different duty-station, should not affect either the Statute of UNITAR or the status of the personnel, except to the extent that local conditions warrant.[14] Since a country agreement with Italy would have to be negotiated, the potential

benefits and/or disadvantages of such an agreement with Italy compared to the current agreement with Switzerland cannot be considered.

60. The physical relocation of UNITAR to Turin, also could involve the loss of experienced key staff who might not be in a position to transfer to Turin for personal reasons. Most of UNITAR's staff work under short-term contracts and it is highly likely that they would not accept being transferred elsewhere under those unstable contractual conditions.

C. PRACTICAL AND/OR FINANCIAL ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES FOR BENEFICIARY COUNTRIES

Advantages of relocating UNITAR from Geneva to Turin

61. While the financial costs and time involved in sending participants to training activities in Turin is an important consideration, there are also qualitative gains from having participants away from the pressures of daily business, interruptions, and pressing appointments, which often mean missing part of the training.

Disadvantages of relocating UNITAR from Geneva to Turin

62. Most interviewees expressed major concern with the issue of the financial costs and time involved in sending participants to training activities in Turin. Since developing countries are the major beneficiaries of the training provided by UNITAR, the fear was that if UNITAR is transferred to Turin, they would face financial and practical difficulties in sending their officials and diplomats there. One representative of the Secretary-General pointed out that the main idea is to transfer the core co-ordination functions to Turin, while the actual training for representatives of permanent missions and governmental officials from capitals would remain in Geneva, New York and Vienna, or wherever it would be most appropriate. Staff and trainers would travel from Turin whenever necessary. Another representative of the Secretary-General pointed out that if participants or trainees would have to travel, funding might be available from the United Nations to send representatives of permanent missions of the developing countries from Geneva to Turin for training.

63. The extent to which there would be a need for a presence through a liaison office or "an antenna" in main duty stations has not been addressed. The financial and practical implications of establishing some offices are unclear.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

64. There is a general consensus on the need to find concrete and implementable ways to co-ordinate the United Nations system training activities in order to use resources more rationally, avoid duplication and overlap, and consolidate activities to the extent possible. There also appears to be general agreement to tackle this question in a comprehensive manner and not to follow a piecemeal approach. The Secretary-General's efforts to find a comprehensive and lasting solution for a better coordination and a potential regrouping of the United Nations system training activities is a key element in this regard. Therefore, the United Nations Staff College Project (UNSCP) should be regarded as part of those efforts.

65. As has been shown above, there are many aspects and issues to consider in assessing the nature, degree and characteristics of closer cooperation between UNITAR and the UNSCP as training entities within the United Nations system. Many of these issues are not particular to the relationship between UNITAR and the UNSCP, but relate to the overall concept, strategy and policy of training in the United Nations system. The UNSCP is a new venture, which could make a contribution. However, the exact nature of that contribution and how it relates to other training elements, can only emerge with experience and further development. In the meantime, UNITAR should continue strengthening its cooperation with the UNSCP through practical and concrete measures, in order to take advantage of U-NITAR's long-standing experience and expertise in training.

66. Pending further elaboration through experience of the UNSCP concept, and as a critical input into the ongoing thinking on regrouping and networking training institutions and activities within the United Nations system, the General Assembly may wish to receive for its consider-ation a comprehensive study of the training institutions and activities within the United Nations system. This review would take stock of all institutions providing training and propose practical, concrete measures to co-ordinate these activities.

NOTES

1. UNITAR Statute, article I, 1990.

2. Letter of the United Nations Legal Counsel to the Executive Director of UNITAR of 15 May 1996.

3. Training and Research: United Nations Institute for Training and Research. Note by the Secretary-General (A/46/482 of 30 September 1991).

4. Statute of International Training Centre of the ILO, Article I as modified by the Governing Body of the ILO at its 249th session (February-March 1991, GB.249/250).

5. Programme and Budget of ILO International Training Centre for 1995 and 1996.

6. Agreement between the United Nations and the International Labour Organization (ILO) regarding the use and occupation of the premises at the International Training Centre of the ILO in Turin and the facilities and services thereof by the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute, 17 May 1996.

7. General Assembly decision of 21 December 1971 (GAOR, 26th session, Agenda item 84, Personnel Questions, Document A/8604, paragraphs 10-18).

8. The Unit has not been able to locate any of these requested or proposed studies and/or reports. UNITAR also has informed the Unit that as far as it is aware, these studies and/or reports are not available.

9. Correspondence of 29 March 1996 between representative of Secretary General and Executive Director of UNITAR

10. Conclusions and recommendations of the Special session of the Board of Trustees of UNITAR held at Geneva from 30 April to 2 May 1996.

11. UNITAR officials confirmed that such analysis could be done, but that the information would be contained within the files and records of programme officers, and would not be available as part of the financial management system. Given the time constraints it was suggested by UNITAR that it, at best, would be very unrealistic to perform such analysis.

12. For instance, recently the Academic Council on the United Nations System (ACUNS), a body of scholars, professionals and others interested in research and studies on the United Nations system, held its annual conference in Turin.

13. Comments provided by Mr. Ralph Zacklin, Director and Deputy to the Under-Secretary-General in charge of the Office of Legal Affairs, dated 25 July 1996.

14. As an example, the agreement regarding the transfer of UNICRI (see note above) does not deal with the question of staff at all, but confines itself to the premises and other common facilities.